

Hilgendorf House
State Route 167, one mile
from County Trunk F, east
of Mequon
Freistadt
Ozaukee County
Wisconsin

HABS No. WIS-146

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Historic American Buildings Survey
National Park Service
Eastern Office, Division of Design and Construction
143 South Third Street
Philadelphia 6, Pennsylvania

HABS No. WIS-146

HISTORIC AMERICAN BUILDINGS SURVEY

HILGENDORF HOUSE

Location: State Route 167, one mile from County Trunk F, east of Mequon, Freistadt, Ozaukee County, Wisconsin.

Present Owner: Oscar Hilgendorf, Route 1, Thiensville, Wisconsin.

Present Occupant: Unoccupied.

Brief Statement of Significance: This house is an example of the half-timber construction known as Fachwerkbau, built by German settlers in Wisconsin. Built about 1845, it is the oldest known remaining example in the Freistadt area.

PART I. HISTORICAL INFORMATION

A. Physical History

1. Original owner: The house was built for Ludwig Hilgendorf.
2. Date of erection: The half-timber section of the house was built about 1845; the stone addition on the north side was built about 1870; and the frame addition on the west side of the stone part was built about 1890.
3. Builder, supplier: Assuming that the house was built by local craftsmen, the framing would have been done by the Zimmermeister, Johann Friedrich Hinz; the masonry and plastering by the Maurermeister, Johannes Link, and the wrought iron hardware by the Schmidt, Christian Knuth.
4. Source of information: HABS measured drawings of the house by Richard W. E. Perrin, 333 West North Avenue, Milwaukee 12, Wisconsin.

- B. Historical Events Connected with the Structure: Ludwig Hilgendorf, the original owner, was one of the original twenty settlers who came from Pomerania with their families in 1839 and founded the first German community in the Wisconsin Territory. They named the community Freistadt, or as originally rendered, Freystatt, meaning a refuge or haven of freedom.

PART II. ARCHITECTURAL INFORMATION

A. General Statement

1. Architectural Character: The oldest section of this house is an example of the half-timber construction known as Fachwerkbau built by the German immigrants in Wisconsin. The stone addition typifies the old rural German custom of providing a home for the Altsitzer, the retired parents, who were entitled to lifelong tenure and other provisions, usually agreed upon when the farm and homestead were conveyed to the eldest son. Some interior partitions have been removed in the half-timber section.
2. Condition of Fabric: The building appears sound, though in a neglected condition with such things as loose clapboards, missing windows, and loose and fallen chimney brick.

B. Technical Description of Exteriors

1. Orientation and over-all dimensions: The half-timber main block is situated with entrances on the north and south sides. The stone addition is at the west end of the north side of the half-timber section. The half-timber section is 25'6" x 35'6", one-and-a-half stories high plus a cellar. The stone section is 18' x 24'6", one story high.
2. Foundations: Rubble masonry foundations, partly plastered.
3. Wall construction: Half-timber section: mortised and tenoned oak frame with 10" x 10" girder in cellar, 8" x 10" sills and first floor beams, 8" x 8" horizontal timbers, 8" x 10" and 8" x 8" posts, 8" x 8" attic floor beams, 6" x 6" and 4" x 4" timbers in gable ends, 6" x 6" rafters; sneaked with limestone chip nogging and pargetted with lime plaster; original interior plank partitions removed. Stone section: 20" limestone rubble walls.
4. Porch, stoop: A porch, originally with a plank floor, extended from the north door of the half-timber section of the house along the east side of the stone section. The stoop at the south entrance to the half-timber section is missing.
5. Chimneys: Two interior brick chimneys in the half-timber section emerge at the roof peak. One chimney is at the center of and contained within the north wall of the stone section.
6. Openings
 - a. Doorways and doors: Original entrances are located at

the centers of the north and south sides of the half-timber section and at the east side of the stone section. The original raised panel doors have been replaced with vertical board doors. Later doors have been cut into the east and west ends of the half-timber section. Part of the simple pilaster trim of the north doorway of the half-timber section is missing. Other doorways have simple, unrelieved frames.

- b. Windows and shutters: Typical original windows in the half-timber section are double hung, 9 over 6 - 8" x 10" lights, in moulded frames set in the heavy timber frame of the house. In the stone section, they are double hung, 6 over 6 - 9" x 12" lights, in unrelieved frames set in masonry openings with brick sills and brick arched lintels. The windows on the stone section only have wood shutters with adjustable louvers. Various windows have been added to the half-timber section including 6 light fixed sash, 1 over 1, and 2 over 2 light double hung.

7. Roof

- a. Shape, covering: Gabled roofs on both the half-timber and the stone sections, covered with sawn wood shingles.
- b. Eaves: Simple boxed eaves on the half-timber section, boxed eaves with moulded fascia and bed mould on stone section.
- c. Dormers: A dormer, three bays wide, has been recently added to the west end of the south side of the half-timber section. It has a reversed shed roof draining toward the house roof, paper sheathed sides, and three large double hung windows with single light sash.

C. Technical Description of Interiors

- 1. Floor plans: Half-timber section: central hallway containing stairway and entrances from the exterior at both ends; partitions which originally divided the space on each side of the central hallway into two rooms have been removed leaving large single rooms; second floor an open loft; cellar under east half cut into the limestone ledge. The stone section which has no interior communication with the half-timber section is divided into a large room, a small bedroom with closet and a pantry.

2. Stairways: Straight run stairway from first to second floor of half-timber section, 12-8-1/2" risers.
 3. Flooring: Wood plank floors.
 4. Wall and ceiling finish: Plaster. Ceiling of half-timber section was originally exposed showing chamfered 8" x 8" ceiling beams. Vertical board wainscoting with moulded chair rail in stone section.
 5. Doorways and doors: Raised panel doors in frames with simple moulded casings.
- D. General setting: The house is in a rural setting with trees and a neglected, overgrown yard.

Prepared by Osmund R. Overby, Architect,
National Park Service - December 1960.

Additional Source of Information: Richard W. E. Perrin, "Historic Wisconsin Buildings, A Survey of Pioneer Architecture, 1835-1870," Lore, vol. X, no. 3 (Milwaukee: Friends of the Museum of the Milwaukee Public Museum, Summer 1960), pp. 82-97.